



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



# Natural Resources Conservation in South Carolina Farm Bill Update



Walter W. Douglas, State Conservationist

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*The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in South Carolina continues to conserve our state's natural resources and protect the environment. For more information, contact the local USDA Service Center in your county.*

## Farm Bill Legislation Increases Funding for Conservation Programs

In the spring of 2002, President George W. Bush announced that he signed the **Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002**. Commonly referred to as the Farm Bill, the legislation represents the single most significant commitment of resources toward conservation on private lands in the Nation's history. The legislation responds to a broad range of emerging natural resource challenges faced by farmers and ranchers, including soil erosion, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and farmland protection. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) South Carolina State Conservationist

Walter W. Douglas said, "Private landowners and farmers in South Carolina will benefit from a portfolio of voluntary assistance, including cost-share, land rental, incentive payments, and technical assistance."

The 2002 Farm Bill places a strong emphasis on the conservation of working lands, ensuring that land remains both healthy and productive. There is an 80 percent increase in spending on land conservation programs that will benefit South Carolina livestock farms and fruit and vegetable growers who historically get little financial assistance. The 2002 Farm Bill also ensures greater access to the programs by making more people eligible for participation. USDA has launched a new website aimed at helping farmers and the general public learn the latest information about the new farm bill. The website

can be accessed from USDA's official website at <http://www.usda.gov/farmbill>.

***"The Farm Bill ensures that South Carolina's private landowners and farmers will benefit from a portfolio of voluntary assistance, including cost-share, land rental, incentive payments, and technical assistance."***

*-Walter W. Douglas  
South Carolina NRCS  
State Conservationist*

## Edgefield Farmer Gives Power to Wildlife

Mr. Frank Berry, a wildlife enthusiast and former peach farmer from Edgefield, SC, is dedicated to preserving wildlife habitat and protecting wildlife on his land. With technical assistance from USDA-NRCS he enrolled 8.6 acres of his land into the **P.O.W.E.R. (Protecting Our Wildlife at Every Right-of-Way) for Wildlife** program. P.O.W.E.R. for Wildlife is a program designed to create and maintain wildlife habitat beneath electrical transmissions lines. Berry has 9 acres of powerline rights-of-way, and to attract wildlife to these locations, several different plantings were placed beneath the rights-of-way, such as bi-color lespedeza. Berry hopes to continue with the P.O.W.E.R. for Wildlife program even after his contract ends. He signed a 5-year agreement to maintain rights-of-way on his property and encourage wildlife on the land. He receives \$60 for 5.5 acres enrolled in the program three times over a period of five years, with a maximum of \$1000 received for the entire period. "I've been around long enough to know that if you don't provide wildlife with food and shelter, they disappear," Berry concluded. For more information, contact NRCS District Conservationist Bob Bowie at 803-637-3220, ext. 101.



*Mr. Frank Berry is a wildlife enthusiast and former peach farmer from Edgefield, SC, who is protecting wildlife through the P.O.W.E.R. for Wildlife program.*

## Farm Bill Program Helps Hog Facility Operator Install Efficient Waste Management System

Charles Quick of Dillon, SC, operates a hog facility on his 350-acre farm and raises nearly 16,000 hogs a year. Due to this large number, waste management is critical. **With financial assistance from the USDA-NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** and technical assistance from District Conservationist Jimmie Harris, Quick established an efficient waste management system that allows him to utilize the waste as a resource to fertilize his crops. The waste management system consists of a waste storage pond, pump, underground pipeline, hydrants (distribution valves) and a traveling gun. The pump draws the waste from the storage pond and pumps it through the pipeline to the fields to be used as fertilizer. There are 10 hydrants located in different areas of his fields. He connects a traveling gun irrigation system to the hydrants to distribute the waste evenly on his crops. Quick feels that this new system has many benefits. "This underground system eliminates a lot of spillage and waste that I experienced when joining pipes together manually above the ground," said Quick. "EQIP has helped me to make the process safe and manageable, with less work." For more information, contact Harris at 843-774-5122, ext. 3.



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## Sediment Surveys on Lake Lyman Lead to Water Restrictions

**Sediment surveys were conducted on Lake Lyman**, a water supply lake for Startex-Jackson-Wellford-Duncan (SJWD) Water District that serves 16,000 homes and businesses in western Spartanburg County. The purpose of the sediment survey was to estimate the volume of water stored in the reservoir and to determine how much storage the reservoir had lost to sediment. The original volume of Lake Lyman was determined from a 1953 contour map, and the present lake

volume was determined by digitizing a recent color infrared (IR) aerial photograph. Based on the difference between the two maps, there was a three feet reduction in storage, and for this reason a mandatory water restriction was instituted. SJWD is dependent on releases from Lyman Lake to provide the 9 million gallons of water per day currently used by customers but wants to reduce this by number by 30 percent and consume only 6 million gallons of water a day. "SJWD estimates that they have about 60-100 days of water supply left in the reservoir," stated Dave Demarest, RC&D Coordinator. With mandatory water restrictions taking place, they hope their customers can reduce their water intake." Recently, water consumption has dropped 15 to 20 percent, but hope is for winter rain to raise the water tables. For more information, contact Demarest at (864) 467-2775, ext. 102.

**Water restrictions were put into place on Lake Lyman in Spartanburg County to protect it from sediment build-up which was polluting the lake. As a result, water consumption has dropped about 20 percent.**



## Partners for Trout Receives Wildlife Conservation Award

South Carolina's **Partners for Trout** was honored at the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Conservation Awards Banquet of the SC Wildlife Federation on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Partners for Trout received the Wildlife Award for their efforts in conserving, enhancing, and restoring cold-water trout habitat along the Eastatoee River in the uppermost northwest corner of the state. Partners for Trout was initiated in 1998 through the efforts of a broad alliance of agencies, trout fishermen, and landowners. A team of agencies led by the Foothills Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) executed the project. Other agencies that have been particularly active include the SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), Trout Unlimited, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Oconee, Pickens, and Greenville Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD's).



*left to right: Gene Dobbins, recently retired NRCS agricultural engineer, Wes Cooler, Foothills RC&D Council Chairman, and Dave Demarest, Foothills RC&D Coordinator, accepted the Wildlife Conservation Award from the SC Wildlife Federation on January 25th.*

## Wheels to Work Program Presents Set of Wheels to SC Resident

**Edisto-Savannah RC&D's *Wheels to Work* demonstration project presented a vehicle on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003, at Honda Cars of Aiken.** During a press conference highlighting the new program (which is being tested in the six county Edisto-Savannah RC&D area which includes Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell, Bamberg, Calhoun, and Orangeburg Counties), Ms. Chellete Perkins drove off in her Saturn vehicle. Wheels to Work will provide 100 previously owned vehicles at zero interest loans to participants of South Carolina Department of Social Service's (DSS) Family Independence Program. Wheels to Work is a first of its kind in the state and will hopefully become a statewide program in the near future.

A successful demonstration project in this area increases the potential for a statewide program.

Wheels to Work makes automobiles available and affordable for eligible participants through low, no-interest monthly payments, with no money down. The program is heavily self-sustained, since all client loan payments are used to purchase additional vehicles. "Wheels to Work offers more than just transportation to Family Independence Program clients—it gives them freedom and in many cases a new beginning as they gain a reliable means of transportation," stated USDA -NRCS State Conservationist Walter W. Douglas. "This program will give participants an initiative for higher achievement and self-improvement".

For more information, please contact Wheels to Work Program Manager Stacy Jamison at (888) 866-8852, ext. 1714, or [scwheels2work@aol.com](mailto:scwheels2work@aol.com). RC&D's are independent, nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations dedicated to improving the quality of life for independent citizens in America's rural areas.



*left to right: Wheels to Work recipient Ms. Chellete Perkins receives the keys to her Saturn from NRCS State Conservationist Walt Douglas. Also pictures are Edisto Savannah RC&D Coordinator Peter Zeck and Wheels to Work Program Manager Stacy Jamison.*